Spartina pectinata - Carex spp. Herbaceous Vegetation

COMMON NAME	Prairie Cordgrass - Sedge species Herbaceous Vegetation
SYNONYM	Prairie Cordgrass - Sedge Wet Meadow
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Herbaceous Vegetation (V)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N)
FORMATION	Temporarily flooded temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.j)
ALLIANCE	SPARTINA PECTINATA TEMPORARILY FLOODED HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM

RANGE

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Spartina pectinata grasslands are rare within Theodore Roosevelt National Park. They are usually restricted to poorly drained depressions within the floodplain of the Little Missouri River. Most are less than 0.5 ha in size.

Globally

This type is found in the northwestern Great Plains in eastern Montana and western North and South Dakota.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

The development of *Spartina pectinata* grasslands occurs best in poorly drained depressions that are saturated for at least part of the growing season. Such conditions are rare in Theodore Roosevelt NP and are generally restricted to the floodplain of the Little Missouri River. However, smaller pactches of *S. pectinata* grasslands can be found near upland seeps and springs.

Globally

At Wind Cave NP in South Dakota, stands occur in drainage bottoms where the soil is wet for at least part of the growing season (H. Marriot personal communication 1999). At Theodore Roosevelt and Badlands National Parks, stands occur in poorly drained depressions within floodplains of major rivers.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Stratum	Species
Herbaceous	*Spartina pectinata, Pascopyrum smithii, Hordeum jubatum*

Globally

Stratum	Species
Graminoid	*Spartina pectinata*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Spartina pectinata is the dominant species. Species richness is generally low in most stands. *Hordeum jubatum* and *Pascopyrum smithii* are typically the most common secondary species.

Globally

At Wind Cave NP in South Dakota, this type has dense herbaceous cover, greater than 75 percent. Species dominance is patchy within stands, with various graminoids locally abundant, often to the exclusion of other species. In the single sampled stand, *Spartina pectinata, Carex nebrascensis*, and *Eleocharis palustris* were locally dominant. *Epilobium ciliatum* was common in shallow water (H. Marriott pers. comm. 1999). At Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota *Spartina pectinata* is the dominant species. Species richness is generally low. *Hordeum jubatum* and *Pascopyrum smithii* are the most prominent secondary species (J. Butler personal communication 1999).

CONSERVATION RANK G3?. This type has a relatively restricted distribution, and occurs in somewhat specialized wetland habitats in an arid climate. In addition, many such wetland sites are subject to heavy grazing pressure by cattle, who favor these moist locations. No element occurrences have been documented for this type, but at least several stands occur within three National Parks in the western Dakotas.

DATABASE CODE CEGL001477

SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS
Spartina pectinata - Calamagrostis stricta - Carex spp. Herbaceous Vegetation (This is the northern tallgrass region equivalent of 1477.)

Spartina pectinata - Scirpus pungens Herbaceous Vegetation (This association may simply be need to split between a *Scirpus pungens* association and a *Spartina pectinata* association.)

COMMENTS
Sites may occasionally flood from rivers or ponding up of depressions.

REFERENCES
Culwell, L.D. and K.L. Scow. 1982. Terrestrial vegetation inventory: Dominy Project Area, Custer County, Montana 1979-1980. Unpublished technical report for Western Energy Company by Westech, Helena, Montana. 144 pp. + 15 pp. Appendix.